

Eve Moran Introduction of Bill Bove: Bill Bove retired last year as Executive Vice President and General Counsel of Encyclopædia Britannica and was a President of The Cliff Dwellers during what he (but no one else) remembers as The Golden Era. Tonight I've asked Bill to discuss his fitness philosophy and the sculptural arts. Knowing Bill's profound incapacity for straightforward discourse, be prepared for him wander off-point, and do take everything he says with more than a grain of salt.

Remarks of William J. Bove
At a Celebration in Honor of
Sculptor Richard Hunt's 80th Birthday
The Cliff Dwellers
September 30, 2015

Mr. Hunt, it is an honor for me to have been asked by Eve Moran to be part of this celebration of both your 80th birthday and your lifetime of extraordinary artistic accomplishment.

I'm really nervous, because I ended up with two big regrets the last time Eve asked me to speak here. It was the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth six years ago when she asked me to talk about Lincoln's humor at a dinner in honor of Roger Ebert. I said then that I felt personally very close to Lincoln. I explained that Lincoln grew up in Illinois. I grew up in Illinois. Lincoln became an Illinois lawyer. I became an Illinois lawyer. Lincoln was tall and thin. I'm obviously tall and thin. Lincoln married a girl from Springfield. I married a girl from Springfield. Lincoln's wife Mary Todd was a complete nutcase. My wife Cathy.... Well, you see where I was going wrong there. In so many words, I said my wife had more than one bolt loose. Later, my wife told me she was very upset. I said only a crazy person would react that way. I've been paying for this since. That's my first regret.

My second regret from that evening is that I gave some examples of Lincoln's humor I found on the Internet that turned out not to be true. I have since read in the always reliable Wikipedia that Lincoln said, and I quote, "The Internet will fool us all. I never made most of the sayings attributed to me on the Internet."

Let me turn to my fitness philosophy. With your lifetime of bending and shaping steel, it should be no surprise that I am in awe of your upper body strength. I have clearly focused on developing my middle trunk girth. My exercise regimen has been quite different from you, in part because until I was 50, I thought middle aged spread was a cheese dip.

I did try an exercise class once. I'm in there jumping up and down, twisting, turning and doing sit-ups and squats. After 30 minutes, when I finally get my leotards on, I left the locker room and found out the exercise class in the gym was over.

I have mostly followed the advice of the University of Chicago's President, Robert Hutchins. He said, "Whenever I feel like exercising, I always lie down until the feeling passes."

Patrick Savage, DePaul's former track coach and a member here, once suggested I take up long distance running and enter marathons. He said I'd get a real runner's high. I told him it seemed like a lot of work to me, because I can get a runner's high just climbing a flight of stairs.

Recently greed caused me to give new thought to working on my body. When I read last spring that Caitlin Jenner's cable reality show might be worth \$75 million, I looked into one of those reassignment type things. I soon realized that for both medical and legal reasons it wouldn't work for me. Medically, I'm overweight and legally, there's a new ban on trans-fats.

While I never formally studied the sculptural arts, I do have one important theory I'd like to bounce off you. When you look at ancient Greek statues, you see lots of people with no arms. When you look at statues in ancient India, you see lots of people with lots of arms. My belief is that India must have conquered Greece once. If that's the case, it was long ago, probably before I was born. Maybe even before World War I. Am I right or am I right?

Along those lines, I'll tell you why I love The Art Institute where you studied. It seems to have so many of the head sculptures that are missing from the statues in other museums.

I haven't been around artists much in my life, but I did have an unfortunate encounter with a sculptor once at a winter festival. He'd used a chain saw to make an ice sculpture of a bear. When I asked him how he was able to create such a delicate work, he said, "I pay attention to detail." Give me a break. Bears don't have tails.

In closing, and on a more serious note, I was entranced by one of the Internet videos of you working with steel in your Lill Street studio. It made me think of Superman, whose TV episodes I watched in the 1950s. He was known as the Man of Steel. It struck me that you are a Man of Steel as well. I remember well how the announcer described Superman back then. This similar description of you doesn't seem far off the mark to me:

Superman ... came to Earth with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men. Superman,

- who can bend steel with his bare hands,
- who is able to grace tall buildings in a single work, and
- who, disguised as Richard Hunt, mild mannered sculptor in a great metropolitan city, fights a never-ending battle for artistic truth, civil justice and his American way.